



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Media Statement from CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, In Observance of One-Year Pandemic Milestone

Media Statement

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One year ago today, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. The toll of this disease and the continued loss of life around the world and in our nation is heartbreaking. To so many of you who have felt the pain and loss of a loved one during this pandemic – you have suffered the ultimate loss, and we grieve with you.

After a year of this fight, we are tired, we are lonely, we are impatient. There have been too many missed family gatherings, too many lost milestones and opportunities, too many sacrifices. And still, through it all, there is determination; there are stories of giving and hope, of stamina and perseverance. We are better together, and together, we will endure.

The vaccination of millions every day gives me hope. Hope that we can beat this pandemic. And hope that we can get back to being with our family, friends, and community. And soon.

Earlier this week, CDC released our first [evidence-based](#) guidance for fully vaccinated people. These [new recommendations](#) are a first step in our process of returning to everyday activities – safely spending time with family and friends, hugging our grandparents and grandchildren, and celebrating birthdays and holidays.

While we accumulate more evidence to support the safe return to everyday activities, please continue taking [precautions](#) in public and when around people who are at high risk for severe COVID-19 disease. Whether you are already vaccinated or not yet vaccinated, wear a well-fitted mask, practice physical distancing, wash your hands often, avoid medium and large gatherings, and avoid travel. We know these measures work to prevent the spread of this virus and help protect each other.

This pandemic will end. And, our public health work will continue. Through the near-blinding spotlight of this crisis, we now clearly see what we should have addressed before– the long-standing inequities that prevent us from achieving optimal health for all. We see the impact of years of neglect of our public health infrastructure. We see the critical need for data that move faster than disease, to prevent rather than react. To move past this pandemic, we must resolutely face these challenges head on and fully embrace the innovations, the new partnerships, and the resilience of our communities that have emerged from this crisis. It is the only way we can turn tragedy and sorrow into lasting progress and improved health for all.

In one year, we have lost over 520,000 Americans to COVID-19. These are grandparents, parents, and children. They are siblings, friends, and neighbors. They are our loved ones and our community. We join together to grieve these losses and intensify our efforts so they were not in vain. I thank you for your perseverance and for your unity of mission. Together, our strength and hope will guide us to the end of this pandemic.

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[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#) 

CDC works 24/7 protecting America's health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America's most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.

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